



Christmas Newsletter

December 1991

Introduction

Review and evaluation are words much in fashion in current educational jargon and schools are constantly being urged to put these aims into practice. It may be that the newsletter, whatever other reasons there are for its existence, can be regarded as part of the review process. Certainly, it provides an opportunity to bring together the many different strands which make up the life and work of the school and it is particularly gratifying to note that at this point in the school year, not quite half-way through the session, the volume of activity is enormous and the record of achievement impressive. However, in the midst of our justifiable pride that so much has been accomplished in the past seventeen weeks, we must not forget that the session was no more than a few days old when we were all saddened by Adam Scott's tragic death in a road accident. It is appropriate that, at this time of year especially, Adam and his family should be in our thoughts.

Staff Notes

The school is fully staffed in accordance with its official complement, but the economic situation ensures that the figure which we are given is a bare minimum, scarcely adequate to meet all the demands of the curricular and other changes which rain down upon schools in a never-ending stream. It is therefore hardly surprising that staff changes have been few and that at the beginning of the session there was only one new member of staff to welcome, Mr. Magnus Latona, who joined the department of Computer Studies. Because teachers of the subject are in short supply, it was not an easy post to fill, but the appointment is significant for another reason. It is an indication that the subject is now so well established in the school that it requires a second full-time teacher.

Mr. Albert Buchanan, Depute Principal Teacher of Art, who had not been in good health for some time, retired at the end of October. He came to Madras in 1971 and during that time his contribution has not just been to the teaching of his subject, at which he was particularly skilled, but to an immense range of school activities in which his help was invaluable. Mr. James Anderson, assistant janitor at Kilrymont Road, retires this week

after 25 years in the post. We thank them both for long and loyal service and wish them every happiness in their new found leisure.

Mrs. Ann Anderson left at the end of September to take up the post of Principal Teacher of Home Economics at Mallaig High School. She had been here 15 years and although we have lost an experienced teacher and a lively personality, we are pleased to see her gaining promotion. Congratulations are also in order for Mrs. Marlyn Brown of the Modern Studies department, since her good work over the last few months in an acting capacity has been recognised by her appointment to the permanent post of Assistant Principal Teacher Social Subjects.

Difficulties in filling the posts vacated by Mr. Buchanan and Mrs. Anderson have not yet been overcome and we are grateful to Mrs. Copland in Home Economics and to a team of Art teachers, Mrs. Duncan, Mrs. Spence and Mrs. Kinnear for providing supply cover in these subjects.

Miss Jack has made a welcome return from long absence, but to Miss Kinnear and Mrs. Norma Brown, who have both had the misfortune to replace her on the absentee list, we send our very best wishes for a speedy recovery. Our thanks are due to Mrs. Nisbet, Mrs. McGeoch and Mrs. Gellatly who have covered these absences and to Mrs. Clarke who has been helping temporarily in Computing to release Mr. Pardoe for regional development work. This has also involved a complicated transfer of timetables between Computing and Business Studies with extra responsibilities for Mr. Beck and Mrs. Milne. Mr. Hamilton is acting as APT Music. Mrs. Rough was acting APT Guidance earlier in the term. We take this opportunity to thank them all for their willingness to undertake these additional responsibilities and for their efficiency in carrying them out.

Academic Achievement

Academically, the school has done very well. SCE results, after appeals have been taken into account, show a 79.6% pass rate at Higher Grade. 27.8% of these are A passes. They are the best Higher results since the early

1980s. The results in Standard Grade, which was a new scene for most subjects, are also very satisfactory. 94.9% of the year group received an award, 42.3% at Credit Level and 38.2% at General Level. It is also worth noting that 281 appeals were submitted by the school and that 51.2% of these were successful.

Rosalind Ashcroft was awarded the Royal Historical Society's Beazley Prize for the best performance in CSYS History and we congratulate her on an outstanding achievement.

Two of the eight prizes awarded by the Institute of Physics for the best performance in Higher Physics have been won by Madras. This is especially noteworthy, since it is the second time in three years that the school has had two national prizewinners in Physics. We congratulate Tim Jupp and Alan Kemp on their success. They recently received their prizes from Mr. Jim Jardine, a name well known to many students of Physics as the author of the standard text book 'Physics is Fun'.

The high standards which the school achieves are perhaps best illustrated by the fact that in the last few weeks over 125 UCCA forms have been completed. It means that out of a total sixth year of 158, 80% are qualified to apply for university places. The exceptionally high return rates to S5 and S6 are also significant in this respect.

Although the national Maths Competition may be regarded by some as slightly less serious business, the quite remarkable results which the school has gained in it are clearly part of the same pattern. 18,668 pupils took part in the competition nationwide. Of the 41 entrants from Madras more than half gained national awards. 6 pupils, Colin Robertson, Claire Dumbleton, Tim Jupp, Gavin Evans, Richard Whyte and Chris Crowe all gained Gold awards which places them in the top 5% nationally. The first three, who had to be in the top 2% to qualify, now go on to the British Maths Olympiad in January. Their success was backed up by 10 Silver and 8 Bronze Awards and the overall achievement is one which few schools could rival.

If any final proof of academic endeavour is required, where else, one wonders, would 15-20 pupils give up their Tuesday lunchtimes to learn classical Greek!

Visits and Visitors

The school has welcomed several overseas visitors this term and without exception they have been impressed with the quality and character of Madras. It has been a

great pleasure to meet Mr. and Mrs. Gibson, two exchange teachers from Australia; Mr. J.T. Mackey, superintendent of schools in Middlesex County, Ontario, and Mrs. Mackey; and two teachers from eastern Europe, Madame Adela Pop from Cluj in Romania and Frau Carola Schumacher from Jena in the former German Democratic Republic, both of whom were taking advantage of travel opportunities not previously open to them. Madame Pop's account of conditions in Romanian schools made a profound impression on staff and pupils. As well as opening up possibilities for helping in practical ways and creating opportunities for future visits and exchanges, she perhaps also taught us to appreciate how well off we really are in terms of our educational provision. Frau Schumacher's visit brought to light a previous association between Madras and her home town of Jena. A description of a visit to that area is the subject of a little book, published in 1891, entitled *Notes on Germany*. Its author, James Beattie, was the then Principal Teacher of English at Madras. His book is dedicated to the 'senior pupils of the Madras College' and his notes first appeared in the school magazine. Incidentally, James Beattie has another claim to literary distinction, since he was the author of the College song which continued to be used at concerts and prize-givings right up to the late 1960s.

We are glad to be renewing a previous link with the United States and two sixth year pupils, Avril Jackson and Clea Waterston, will spend next term on an exchange with Great Valley High School in Pennsylvania. Just before the October holiday a group of Modern Studies pupils took part in a ten day tour of eastern Europe, visiting Berlin, Prague, Budapest and Vienna. Just after the holiday another group, comprising pupils from the three N.E. Fife secondary schools, attended the Euroscola conference in Strasbourg for pupils from all the EC member countries. Although they did not have to travel any further than Lochgelly, S4 Modern Studies pupils were also into Europe when they took part along with other Fife schools, in a mock Euro Parliament which debated the issue of economic aid for Poland. Last year's visit to London's financial institutions has been repeated and Higher Economics pupils have just returned from two interesting days in the City. Higher Art pupils have twice travelled to Edinburgh, to visit the exhibition of Australian Art at the Gallery of Modern Art and the BP sponsored Scottish Artist/Designer Exhibition at the Royal Scottish Academy.

Sporting Success

The school's footballers have been notably successful. The First XI has remained unbeaten this season in friendlies, league fixtures and the Scottish Cup. In this

competition they have gone further than any previous Madras team and following their recent win over Shawlands Academy Glasgow, they are now in the quarter finals. The under 13 team were only 90 seconds away from a similar result. The match ended in a 1-1 draw after extra time but unfortunately they lost the replay. The staff retained the St. Andrews Community Council Challenge Shield with a convincing win in the annual charity match against Waid Academy staff. In the girls' game which preceded the staff match, Madras girls, playing their first game together, acquitted themselves well, but lost to a more experienced Waid Academy team. Michael Scott has played regularly for the Fife Schools under 15 team and in their match against Dundee schools scored the only goal of the game. Martin Reid is in the Fife Schools under 18 squad.

Golf tends to be an autumn activity, because the school championships can be played when the courses are quieter. Junior, Intermediate and Senior results are: Stroke play - Michael Aitken (Smith Shield), Ian Steven (Jock Hutchison Trophy), Stuart Macgregor (Victory Cup); match play - Ryan Lumsden (Aikman Cross), Darren Liddle (Soutar Cup), Martin Reid (Chillicothe Cup). Girls' Championship – Morag Campsie (Kilrymont Ladies Cup). The Madras College Golf Club dates back to the 1850s and it was fitting that two Madras teams, in period costume and appropriately equipped with hickory shafted clubs, took part in the Grand Match, a reconstruction of a Victorian golfing occasion organised by the Community Council. The school team was narrowly beaten by Bell Baxter in the Scottish Schools Team Championship. James Bunch has gained a place in the 1992 National Team Pool.

In rugby the 1st XV have suffered only one defeat in eight matches. A strong 2nd XV are unbeaten in three matches. Stephen McIntosh has played two games for the North Midlands under 15 team in the District Championship. The number of pupils turning out for training remains good despite the weather and there is a high level of commitment from the players.

Six hockey teams have regularly taken the field for inter-school games but results so far have been mixed. However, a notable success was gained in the Fife Schools Tournament which was won by the 1st XI. Claire Hunter, Elizabeth Orr and Eilidh Smith have gained places in Midlands District squads. Nine school teams competed in the Fife Schools' Road Relay Championships, gaining two 2nd and two 3rd places.

Drama

There has been so much dramatic activity of one kind and another that it rates a separate section. The junior

drama group has been well supported with over 60 pupils taking part. They are presenting *Journey of the Magi* at the Christmas concert. The Quad Theatre are busily rehearsing *The Lark*, Jean Anouilh's play about Joan of Arc, for their January production. Other pupils from English and Drama classes have taken part in playdays at the Byre (*Hocuc Pocus*, *Wuthering Heights*) and have attended a number of performances (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Anne Frank*, *Whale*, *Sunset Song*). They have also been able to take advantage of the workshop and discussion sessions which have been provided in school by several visiting companies (*A Deafening Silence*, *Women and Work* and a follow-up to *Sunset Song*). A logistical problem was turned into a theatrical experience for 226 S1 pupils who travelled to the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh for a performance of *Shinda The Magic Ape*. Senior pupils engaged in a Scotvec Theatre for the Community module have been visiting local primary schools and hope to take a play out to some of them in March. The invitation to Mrs. Kirk to serve on two outside bodies, the Byre Theatre's Education Advisory Group and Scottish Drama, an organisation concerned with theatre for young people in Scotland, is well deserved recognition of her contribution to Drama teaching.

Debating

Senior and junior debates have been well attended and participation has been lively. The annual inter-house debate for the Rotary Club Trophy was won by Blackfriars. The winner of the Jimmy Thomson Trophy for junior public speaking was Chris Irwin. Both events produced a high standard of speaking. In outside competitions our senior speakers have put up good performances. However, they lost to more experienced opposition in the early stages of the Britannic Assurance ESU Debate, although they held on until the 3rd round in the ESU Public Speaking Competition. In the Courier TSB debate the school is still represented by two junior teams.

Music

Most of the Music department's effort in recent weeks has been devoted to preparations for the Christmas Concerts which are expected to play to the usual packed houses. Brass players took part in Remembrance Services at St. Andrews and Moonzie and we acknowledge the help given by Miss Mair in keeping the Brass Group going in the absence of a permanent replacement for Mr. Lake. The early Music Group has enhanced its growing reputation by giving several recitals in St. Andrews and further afield. The Senior Choir took part in the service of lessons and carols in St. Leonards Church and will be carol singing in Market Street in aid of Oxfam's special 50th anniversary appeal.

Industry and Initiative

Contact with local business and industry has been maintained through the Aware Scheme from which many S4 pupils have benefited. Preparations for the S3 phase of the scheme which takes place next term are well in hand. Regrettably, the Challenge of Industry conference, which has run successfully for the last five years, has had to be cancelled because the necessary number of industrialists did not have time available. It is hoped that this is merely a temporary set back and that the conference can be revived, though possibly in a different form. The school's Young Enterprise Company devised a board game about St. Andrews which has proved so popular that sales have exceeded all expectations. The members of the company are having to work flat out to meet their production targets. The Old Course Hotel has provided the company's advisers and we take this opportunity to acknowledge their help. A Fashion Show, organised by the PTA and the Home Economics department, proved a great success. Mrs. Mobeck and Mrs. Grant discovered a number of pupils with an unexpected talent for modelling and produced a very professional display with the minimum of rehearsal time. 1991 was a Careers' Convention year. We are indebted to the Rotary Club of St. Andrews and Fife Careers Service for the major part they played in ensuring that a wide range of information and advice was available to the large number of parents and pupils who attended.

Two examples of pupil centred charitable activity are worthy of mention. A sponsored swim in aid of the National Asthma Fund raised £ 1,290. A disco, organised through Community Use by S3 pupils, Victoria Rees, Julie Methven and Lisa Mitchell, raised £180 for Children in Need.

End of term at last...

And on that happy note we end our newsletter with every good wish for the holidays and the festive season.



Some Useful Dates for your Diary

Christmas Holidays

Term ends—Friday, 20th December, 1991
Term begins—Monday, 6th January, 1992

Mid Term Holiday—Monday, 10th and Tuesday, 11th February, 1992

In-Service—Tuesday, 4th February, 1992

Easter Holidays

Term ends—Friday, 27th March, 1992
Term begins—Monday, 13th April, 1992
Good Friday—17th April, 1992

Parents' Nights

S5/6 — Tuesday, 21st January, 1992
S2 — Thursday, 20th February (*half year group*)
S2 — Thursday, 27th February (*half year group*)
S3 — Wednesday, 22nd April, 1992
S1 — Tuesday, 26th May, 1992

Examinations

S3—Monday, 20th January—Tuesday, 4th February
S2—Monday, 16th March—Friday, 20th March

PTA Meetings

Wednesday, 15th—Friday, 18th January, 1992—
School Drama Production

Venue: Byre Theatre

Wednesday, 28th January—'Next Step'
Careers; vocational guidance;
equal opportunities

Thursday, 13th February—'Into Europe'

Wednesday, 4th March—'Madras College: A School
and Its Character'

Venue: Leuchars Primary

Thursday, 12th March—AGM